

## Loreng, John

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**From:** Wynn, Fred  
**Sent:** Tuesday, January 15, 2002 11:20 AM  
**To:** Klingler, Nancy; Loreng, John; Laine, Douglas; Moore, James  
**Subject:** FW: Security On Campus Update Vol. 1, No. 26; January 13-19, FYI. Apologies if any of you already got this.

-----Original Message-----

**From:** Security On Campus, Inc. [mailto:update@campussafety.org]  
**Sent:** Tuesday, January 15, 2002 12:49 AM  
**To:** List Member  
**Subject:** Security On Campus Update Vol. 1, No. 26; January 13-19, 2002



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## Sexual Assaults, Other Campus Crime Hidden At Salem International University

Federal Review Finds Officials May Have Deliberately Underreported Statistics

*By Lara Turner*

**Salem, WV-**The U.S. Department of Education has accused a Salem, West Virginia college of intentionally hiding information about campus crime and violating the *Jeanne Clery Disclosure of Campus Security Policy and Campus Crime Statistics Act* (also known as the Campus Security Act).

Following a review of Salem International University's reporting practices, Institutional Review Specialists with the Education Department found that the underreporting of crime statistics "may have resulted from the deliberate and/or willful acts of one or more university officials."

However, Assistant Dean of Students Jerry Schearer, said via e-mail that the university "understands that concerns have been raised and will thoroughly review all aspects of the report. SIU intends to use the sixty day response time to review the issues and ensure that it is in full compliance with the Campus Security Act."

According to a December 17, 2001 letter from team leader John S. Loreng to SIU President Fred Zook, the [program review report](#) contains specific findings of non-compliance and lists recommendations designed to assist the university toward full compliance with the Clery Act. SIU officials must respond, in writing, to each allegation and state how it plans to correct the findings

of non-compliance within 60 days.

"Given the report's comments, I suspect they are setting up a recommended civil penalty (fine) for the final program review determination, said S. Daniel Carter, senior vice president for Security on Campus Inc., a non-profit organization that monitors campus crime reporting and activities.

"Institutions can be fined up to \$25,000 per violation, so conceivably SIU may be facing up to a quarter million dollars in fines given the 10 individual findings."

The report says that Institutional Review Specialists James Moore and Fred Wynn conducted a review on June 11-22 and August 21-24 of last year to determine the accuracy and completeness of campus crime statistics and policy disclosures as published in SIU's Campus Security Reports for 1997, 1998 and 1999.

The review provides for the identification of fraud and misuse and monitors administrative activity, but is not an audit or a criminal investigation.

According to the review, the university failed to:

- Report specific incidents
- Coordinate information from all sources
- Issue timely warnings
- Report hate crimes in prior reports; and,
- Distribute the Campus Security Report in accordance with federal law.

SIU officials are also accused of miscoding other incidents and omitting or offering incomplete statements about its security policies. Specifically, the Education Department contends that the university reported no allegations of forcible sex offenses even though the review team discovered five such allegations during its search of campus crime records.

The DOE report also contends that the university officials were aware of these incidents and, in at least one case, failed to do any follow-up work, make inquiries, offer assistance to the alleged victim or make contacts to find specific details of the incident. Statements given by those interviewed about the university's reporting practices allege that SIU officials would have to be aware of these crimes.

"The allegations against SIU are very serious, this is the first case we are aware of where the DOE has alleged that a school intentionally hid campus crime information in violation of the Clery Act," Carter said. "Usually such underreporting has been blamed on confusion about what is reportable, or record keeping problems."

The review also accuses the university of under-reporting crimes, such as burglary. In 1997, for example, SIU handbooks claim there were no burglaries, but review team officials found 16 incidents. In 1998, the university reported only five incidents to the review team's 14 and, in 1999, SIU officials reported only 11 of the 26 found by the review team.

The review says many incidents were miscoded and, in some cases, were not given codes at all. The review team was forced to make an independent determination of which incident reports were used to compile the statistics in SIU's annual campus security report because the university was unable to demonstrate how it calculated the report's statistics.

According to the review, the university did not gather all information before releasing its campus security report because of the miscoding, the omission of arrest and judicial board referral data and the omission of incidents filed with the student health department.

Review team members also found that the university failed to issue timely warnings when serious crimes against persons and property, including assaults, burglaries and indecent exposures, were reported to be occurring on campus.

The report also suggests that the university failed to report possible hate crimes when incident reports suggested them, and failed to actively distribute its annual campus security report. SIU also failed to inform students of their rights following crimes and gave vague statements to sexual assault victims that would hinder a meaningful choice about their options, the report says.

In general, the report suggests that the university's security staff is underfunded - with a yearly operating budget of a little more than \$2,000 - understaffed and not given the proper training on report writing and Uniform Crime Reporting. It also says that university officials have not taken the initiative to oversee a standard campus security policy.

For example, the report says that campus security officers also have to spend their time working with the physical plant, delivering mail and watering the president's lawn while he is out of town.

Review team specialists also gave university officials a list of ways to improve its reporting system, including:

- Designating a single administrator as the primary party responsible for overseeing the preparation, publishing and distribution of the campus security report.
- Implementing an enhanced record-keeping system that provides for an adequate audit trail, as well as custody and control of sensitive information.
- Establish uniform standards for report writing.
- Work with local law enforcement and other outside agencies to improve reporting and information sharing.
- Give security officers the expanded authority to contact external agencies.
- Expand outreach and oversight of athletic programs and the Greek system; and,
- Increase investments in the Office of Campus Security and its personnel.

"By hiding campus crime information from their students SIU has robbed them of the chance to make informed decisions about avoiding victimization," Carter said.

But, according to Schearer, the university is working with the Department of Education to improve the discrepancies. He said that in the meantime, "SIU intends to provide a safe campus for its students and will continue to work to achieve that end."

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## **Campus Crime In The News**

Supreme Court to take up student privacy case (AP; 01/11/02)

University plans to investigate campus police further (The Star Press; 01/11/02)

**Murder suspect found, will be tried in China for death of UA student (Arizona Daily Wildcat; 01/09/02)**

**Pennsylvania Gov. signs new college fire safety law (U-Wire; 01/09/02)**

**University publishes new criminal statistics (Ball State Daily News; 01/08/02)**

**Colleges learning security matters (Baltimore Sun; 01/07/02)**



<http://www.campussafety.org/>

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